

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RIYADH 00636 011157Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 HA-05 ISO-00 EA-10 IO-13 EB-08
COME-00 L-03 H-01 SP-02 PA-01 CA-01 /061 W
-----031628 020035Z /14
R 011100Z AUG 78
FM USLO RIYADH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 626
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 636

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, CARR, US, SA, UK
SUBJ: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF NON-MOSLEMS

REF RIYADH 514

1. USLO HAS BEEN CONTACTED BY MALCOLM QUINT, RIYADH REPRESENTATIVE OF ARAMCO, CONCERNING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF NON-MOSLEMS. ARAMCO HAS SEVERAL EMPLOYEES OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES IN PRISON AWAITING LASHINGS, AND A PENDING GAMBLING AND THEFT CASE IN DHAHRAN INVOLVING A PHILIPPINO NATIONAL IN WHICH THE PROSECUTOR HAS DEMANDED AMPUTATION.

2. QUINT HAS REGULAR ACCESS TO INTERIOR MINISTRY DEPUTY MINISTER IBRAHIM AL-AWAJI, WITH WHOM USLO ALSO ENJOYS GOOD RELATIONS. QUINT STATED THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS TURNED OVER TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE IF EXPATRIATES SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT. THIS PROBLEM WAS PASSED ON BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO THE COUNCIL OF ULEMAS, OR LEARNED HOLY MEN, TO DECIDE THE GENERAL QUESTION OF APPLICABILITY OF SHARIA LAW AND ITS PENALTIES TO NON-BELIEVERS. THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED BY USLO IN REFTEL. QUINT FURTHER STATED THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FORMALLY RECOMMENDED THAT
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DEPORTATION AUTOMATICALLY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR LASHINGS IN ANY CASE INVOLVING NON-MOSLEM OFFENDERS. THIS HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED.

3. ARAMCO IS STRIDENTLY AGAINST THE IMPOSITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON NON-MOSLEMS. IT WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR ITS EMPLOYEES, WHATEVER THE

EVENTUAL COUNCIL OF ULEMA RULING, DUE TO THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND HARDSHIPS ENDURED BY ITS NON-MOSLEM EMPLOYEES IN THE KINGDOM.

4. COMMENT: PRAGMATIC MININT DEPORTATION RECOMMENDATION WILL NOT NECESSARILY CARRY MUCH WEIGHT WITH CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS LEADERS. WHATEVER THE DECISION, IT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE MADE IN HASTE. LASHINGS TO DATE HAVE GENERALLY OCCURRED IN MORE REMOTE AREAS CHARACTERIZED BY STRONG LOCAL, CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDES AND PONDEROUS COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. MININT IS RELUCTANT TO INITIATE FULL-SCALE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF NON-MOSLEMS WITHOUT FORMAL DECISION OF ULEMAS AS JUSTIFICATION. EVEN THEN CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO ITS USE WILL REMAIN.
GRANINGER

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